

TOWN OF GREAT BARRINGTON
PUBLIC HEARING OF THE GREAT BARRINGTON FINANCE COMMITTEE
WITH THE GREAT BARRINGTON SELECTBOARD

MINUTES

MARCH 27, 2013

7:00 P.M. – SELECTMEN'S MEETING ROOM

FINANCE COMMITTEE:

TOM BLAUVELT - Chairman

WALTER ATWOOD

MARK LEFENFELD

ANDREW MORO

SHARON GREGORY

PRESENT:

SEAN STANTON - Chairman

STEVEN BANNON

ANDREW BLECHMAN – ABSENT

ALANA CHERNILA

DEB PHILLIPS

SEAN STANTON

KEVIN O'DONNELL, TOWN MANAGER

1. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 P.M. by Tom Blauvelt.

II. Approval of Minutes of the Joint Meetings of Finance Committee and Board of Selectmen.

MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 12, 2013 – FINANCE COMMITTEE

MOTION: Andy Moro to approve as amended.

SECOND: Mark Lefenfeld

VOTE: 5-0

MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 12, 2013 – BOARD OF SELECTMEN

MOTION: Deborah Phillips to approve as amended.

SECOND: Steven Bannon

VOTE: 4-0

MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 13, 2013 – FINANCE COMMITTEE

MOTION: Buddy Atwood to approve.

SECOND: Any Moro

VOTE: 5-0

MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 13, 2013 – BOARD OF SELECTMEN

MOTION: Deborah Phillips to approve.

SECOND: Steven Bannon

VOTE: 4-0

MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 19, 2013 – FINANCE COMMITTEE

MOTION: Buddy Atwood
SECOND: Andy Moro
VOTE: 4-0-1 (Tom Abstained)

MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 19, 2013 – BOARD OF SELECTMEN

MOTION: Deborah Phillips to approve.
SECOND: Steven Bannon
VOTE: 4-0

MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 20, 2013 – FINANCE COMMITTEE

MOTION: Mark Lefenfeld – as amended
SECOND: Andy Moro
VOTE: 5-0

MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 20, 2013 – BOARD OF SELECTMEN

MOTION: Deborah Phillips – as amended
SECOND: Steve Bannon
VOTE: 4-0

MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 20, 2013 – FINANCE COMMITTEE ONLY MEETING AT 5:30 P.M.

MOTION: Mark Lefenfeld to approve.
SECOND: Andy Moro
VOTE: 5-0

III. Discussion re: Outstanding Budget Matters.

Kevin said he sent out the 10th amendment for the extension of the sales agreement for the Castle Street Fire Station. The current amendment will expire April 4, 2013. The new proposed extension will run through May 10, 2013.

MOTION: Deborah Phillips to extend the contract to May 10, 2013.
SECOND: Steve Bannon
VOTE: 4-0

After discussion, the motion was amended:

MOTION: Deborah Phillips to amend the motion and extend the contact to June 11, 2013.
SECOND: Steve Bannon
VOTE: 4-0

Kevin said the committee had asked for comparable data on the compensation that the Board of Assessors receives. He noted there wasn't anything that indicated it to be too low or high. He advised on the CPA which is one of the articles before Town Meeting the Board of Selectmen had discussed a \$100,000 Commercial Exemption which is a new exemption provided under state law. If we proceed with that, we will still need to have a ballot vote after Town Meeting sometime. The commercial exemption wouldn't go into effect for a year.

The public works superintendent put together a memorandum about VanDeusenville Road being deferred from the budget while we put bike paths in. The road is not wide enough for us to put a bike path in without spending a lot of money so it is being left in the CIP as it is. It is scheduled for FY 14. Sharon said that she thought funds were going to be reallocated to pave the Castle Street Sidewalk because it was not included in this year's budget. Kevin said we can delete \$10,000 from the CIP for some other sidewalks.

MOTION: Sharon to include the castle Street sidewalk improvement leading to the underpass to be included in the FY 14 budget.

SECOND: Andy Moro

VOTE: 4-0-1 (Buddy Atwood abstained)

MOTION: Debbie Phillips to put the Castle Street sidewalk on the priority list in the CIP for FY 14.

SECOND: Steve

VOTE: 4-0

Housatonic School:

Kevin said we can mothball the Housatonic School with a \$5,000 deductible and purchase vacant building coverage for \$2,700 without vandalism coverage or \$12,700 with the coverage. Kevin advised that he met with the Police Chief and DPW Superintendent and he said they all felt confident that the vandalism coverage wasn't necessary as the Police will be monitoring the building. It will cost just under \$20,000 to mothball the building. It would be approximately \$50,000 to maintain the building annually. It was noted that Bridge's lease expires at the end of the month and they need to be notified to vacate by June 30, 2013. It was noted by mothballing the school; it will save the town \$37,000 FY 14.

FINANCE COMMITTEE:

MOTION: Sharon to begin the process of mothballing the Housatonic School and notify the tenant that they have to be out by June 30, 2013. The cost of mothball the building is approximately \$20,000; drain the heat system, \$7,000 and \$2,700 for insurance.

SECOND: Mark Lefenfeld

VOTE: 5-0

BOARD OF SELECTMEN:

MOTION: Debbie Phillips to mothball the Housatonic School and notify the tenants that they have to be out by June 30, 2013.

SECOND: Steve Bannon

VOTE: 4-0

IV Public Hearing FY14 Budget – Conducted by Finance Committee.

A motion was made by Buddy Atwood and Seconded by Sharon Gregory to open the public hearing at 7:30 p.m.

1) Public Input:

David Magadini said the Town Report that is issued every year is an important document and the warrant articles should be published in their original form. He said he would like sufficient funds put in the budget to cover the additional expense.

Ann Condon, 20 Hollenbeck Avenue. She noted that the road is sinking around the drain on Castle Street. Kevin noted that there is no road work planned for Castle Street in FY14. It was noted that the Town doesn't own the upper part of Castle Street where you come out of the tunnel. The town owns the entrance to the stairwell.

Richard Needleman, 9 Stanley Drive. He advised that a second telephone line is needed for the Senior Center. Polly Mann, Director of the Senior Center advised that everything is in place with Verizon to do that.

Dan Bailly, 207 North Street – regarding the Capital Improvement Projects. He asked if there has been a formal list prioritizing the sidewalks that need to be repaired. Joe Sokul said several

months ago he presented to the board with a priority list and an assessment of the sidewalks and it is updated each year.

Peter Dillon, 215 Long Pond Road in regard to the school budget. He noted that overall the increase to the member towns is \$45,830.00 and that represents a .27% increase. He noted the increase to Great Barrington is \$454,320.00 with a decrease to Stockbridge and West Stockbridge. He advised that the minimum local contribution is about half of the increase of the \$454,000 and the second thing is the shift in enrollment. Part of the agreement in the Regional school district with the 3 member towns are that the formula is tied to enrollment which generates the assessment to the towns. Last year Great Barrington had 67.6% and this year Great Barrington has 69.9 % of the kids. At the meetings, people suggested a 5 year average in enrollment so if there is a shift, it will be spread out.

MOTION: Mark Lefenfeld to close the public hearing

SECOND: Andy Moro

VOTE: 5-0

The Public hearing closed at 7:55 p.m.

Sharon noted that we could move forward with a “super regional school district” with combined personnel, grounds and other possible departments, etc. The infrastructure could be reduced. It was suggested to meet with other districts about consolidating some potential functions.

V. Adoption of FY14 Budget as voted by Finance Committee and Board of Selectmen.

Kevin noted that the Finance Committee and Board of Selectmen agreed on the increase in the levy at \$542,948.59. The school board adopted their budget increase for Great Barrington at \$454,320.00. The total general fund operating budget went up \$5,008.00 with the Finance Committee and was reduced by \$52,493.00 with the Board of Selectmen. The CIP didn't change. The only thing that was modified was the debt service as it relates to engine 6 (Fire Truck). The overall impact about to be raised by taxes is \$18,263,829.06 for Finance Committee and \$18,206,329.06 for the Board of Selectmen. The tax impact on the average home is \$5,047.48 with the Finance Committee and \$5,031.58 with the Board of Selectmen. With the Finance Committee we are almost 1.3 million under levy limit and 1.38 million with the Board of Selectmen. The Total Budget decrease is 6.2% or \$1,726,063. The Board of Selectmen has taken out the \$100,000 that he recommended for the OPEB liability funding and they added back the insurance. The property tax including the school district is going up 2.1%.

Ramsdell – Kevin advised that we left alone in the outlying years of the CIP to have a discussion with the historical society, the library board and Select Board to determine the best allocation of resources for that. We were anticipating at one point a grant that would cover approximately 50% of the first 3 million dollars which was for remodeling and upgrading. That will be postponed till the discussion referenced above by Kevin. The \$800,000 for Dewey School – that is to do the borrowing for the improvements that we have agreed upon with the State and we would recapture most of that through the rent. The state is still open to a 10 year lease agreement. The \$385,000 is the remediation of the old Fire station and Searles/Bryant and it would be taken out of Free Cash. That would leave the Free Cash at 3.1 million dollars. The difference in the Finance Committee Budget and the Board of Selectmen's Budget is dealing with the salary and insurance for the Selectmen and the OPEB. Both boards have agreed to delete engine 6 from the debt service.

Kevin noted that Line item #159 can be reduced by \$37,000 for the Housatonic School. It was \$66,000.

MOTION: Deborah Phillips to reduce Line Item 159 to \$29,000.

SECOND: Steven Bannon

VOTE: 4-0

MOTION: Buddy Atwood to reduce Line Item 159 to \$29,000.
SECOND: Mark Lefenfeld
VOTE: 5-0

Buddy Atwood noted that there are three petition articles submitted by the library that were not discussed with the Finance Committee or Board of Selectmen. One is for \$15,000 for the purpose of repair/improvement projects at the Ramsdell Library. The second is to appropriate \$22,000 of unspent accumulated library state aid to hire a consultant to provide ADA accessible compliance and the next one is for \$2,500 to be taken from free cash to hire a part-time temporary person to assist in cataloguing historic documents at Ramsdell. Shawn noted that in his research, they do not have to ask the Boards for funds. He said nowhere in the Town Charter does it say the Town Manager will be responsible for the libraries.

Kevin noted that in the Town Manager/Selectmen Budget that the Board of Selectmen voted to keep the \$7,500 salary in and the Finance Committee voted not to include it in the budget. There is a difference of \$20,000 in consultants – The Finance Committee voted to appropriate \$22,500 and the Board of Selectmen voted to appropriate \$2,500.

MOTION: Buddy Atwood to reduce Line 7 – Legal to \$30,000.
SECOND: Andy
VOTE: 2-3
Motion Failed

BOARD OF SELECTMEN:

MOTION: Deborah Phillips to change the Town Manager Salary Line 2 to from \$103,577.00 to \$109,000.00.
SECOND: Steve Bannon
VOTE: 4-0.

FINANCE COMMITTEE:

MOTION: Sharon to support the increase in Line 2 to increase the Town Manager's salary from \$103,577.00 to \$109,000.00.
SECOND: Mark Lefenfeld
VOTE: 3-2.

The Board of Selectmen is supporting a relocation allowance of \$10,000. Shawn noted that we advertised the salary to be between \$90,000 to \$115,000.

FINANCE COMMITTEE:

MOTION: Sharon to reduce the Consultants/Grants line item (8) to \$2,500.
SECOND: Andy Moro
VOTE: 5-0

The Consultant line item was for extra consultant fees on the basis that the health care was deleted and for additional training for the Board of Selectmen.

Kevin noted that the only difference between the Finance Committee and the Board of Selectmen is the \$7,500 for the Selectmen's salary and health insurance. The Finance Committee recommendation is now \$399,975.00.

Page: 10 - Line Item 231 – Health/Life Insurance:

The Finance Committee recommended no insurance and the Select Board recommended Insurance. The difference between the two is \$55,000.

Buddy Atwood noted that he wants to reduce the Police Department budget by \$25,000 for a new total of \$1,426,767.00.

MOTION: Buddy Atwood to reduce the Police Department budget by \$25,000.

SECOND: Andy Moro

VOTE: 2-2-1 (Motion failed)

Chief Walsh noted that it was unfair and a terrible idea to reduce the Police budget. The department runs 24/7 and it takes a large budget to run the department. He stated that everyone should take a cut not just the DPW and Police.

MOTION: Sharon to cut \$100,000 out of the two largest budgets (DPW and Police) and Kevin can work with the Departments.

The motion failed for lack of a second.

BOARD OF SELECTMEN:

MOTION: Seven Bannon that we use \$200,000 out of Free Cash and \$100,000 out of OPEB to reduce the budget by \$300,000.

SECOND: Deborah Phillips

VOTE: 4-0

FINANCE COMMITTEE:

MOTION: Sharon to use \$200,000 out of Free Cash and \$100,000 out of OPEB to reduce the budget by \$300,000.

SECOND: Mark Lefenfeld

VOTE: 3-2

FINANCE COMMITTEE:

MOTION: Buddy Atwood that the total salaries in the DPW account be reduced by \$20,000.

SECOND: Andy Moro

VOTE: 5-0

The new balance is \$940,681.00

BOARD OF SELECTMEN:

MOTION: Deborah Phillips to reduce the total salaries in the DPW by \$20,000.

SECOND: Steve Bannon

VOTE: 4-0

FINANCE COMMITTEE:

MOTION: Sharon Gregory to reduce the Police Department budget by \$20,000 – 2% of the Police Department budget – unspecified line item.

SECOND: Andy Moro

Sharon amended her motion to reduce the budget by \$15,000.

SECOND: Andy Moro

VOTE: 2-3 (Motion failed)

FINANCE COMMITTEE:

MOTION: Buddy Atwood to reduce the Library budget (Line items 206-219) by \$39,500 for a total of \$448,845.00.

SECOND: Andy Moro

VOTE: 2-2-1 (Sharon abstained) (motion failed)

Line Item 231 – Health Insurance –

FINANCE COMMITTEE

MOTION: Buddy Atwood to reduce Line Item 231 by \$90,000.

SECOND: Andy Moro

VOTE: 3-2 (Motion failed)

2013 ANNUAL TOWN MEETING WARRANT ARTICLES:

FINANCE COMMITTEE:

1.) Authorize Revolving Funds

MOTION: Buddy Atwood to recommend.

SECOND: Andy Moro

VOTE: 5-0

2) Elected officials' Salaries

MOTION: Mark Lefenfeld – not to recommend.

SECOND: Sharon Gregory

VOTE: 2-3

3) Highway Mass DOT Funds

MOTION: Buddy Atwood to recommend.

SECOND: Andy Moro

VOTE: 5-0

4) Borrowing for Capital Items

MOTION: Mark Lefenfeld to recommend.

SECOND: Andy Moro

VOTE: 5-0

5) FY'14 Capital Expenditures

MOTION: Andy Moro to recommend.

SECOND: Mark Lefenfeld

VOTE: 5-0

6) Borrowing for the Fire Truck

MOTION: Andy Moro to recommend.

SECOND: Mark Lefenfeld

VOTE: 5-0

7. FY'14 Operating Budget as amended March 27, 2013

MOTION: Mark Lefenfeld to recommend.

SECOND: Sharon Gregory

VOTE: 4-0-1

8. Borrowing for Dewey School Improvements

MOTION: Andy Moro to recommend.

SECOND: Mark Lefenfeld

VOTE: 5-0

9. FY'14 Wastewater Treatment Budget

MOTION: Andy Moro to recommend.

SECOND: Sharon Gregory

VOTE: 5-0

10. Reauthorization of Council on Aging Funds

MOTION: Andy Moro to recommend.
SECOND: Mark Lefenfeld
VOTE: 5-0

11. FY' 14 Regional School Assessment (Operating and Capital budgets)

MOTION: Mark Lefenfeld to recommend.
SECOND: Tom Blauvelt (stepped down as chairman)
VOTE: 3-2

12. Authorize use of Pension Reserve Fund

MOTION: Andy Moro to recommend.
SECOND: Mark Lefenfeld
VOTE: 5-0

13. Authorize use of Free Cash to reduce the tax levy

MOTION: Buddy Atwood to recommend using \$2,350,000.00 of Free Cash.
SECOND: Andy Moro
VOTE: 5-0

14. Authorize creation of OPEB trust fund.

This was eliminated.

BOARD OF SELECTMEN:

MOTION: Deborah Phillips to recommend all Warrant Articles as written (#1-13)
SECOND: Steve Bannon
VOTE: 3-0

Sharon Gregory made a motion at 10:00 p.m. to adjourn. It was seconded by Mark Lefenfeld.

Respectfully submitted,



Carolyn Wichmann
Secretary